



Zürich, 21.03.2023

Guidelines for English Bachelor and Master Theses with Prof. Tilmann Altwicker

1. Principle Guidelines

- *Structure*: The structure of the thesis is as follows: Cover sheet, table of contents, table of abbreviations, main text, bibliography, appendix if necessary.
- *Expected volume of a Master thesis*: A Master thesis with 12 ECTS should be 30-40 pages long (60'000 - 80'000 characters, with footnotes but not including spaces; plus cover sheet and indices) (in justified cases exceptions can be granted by e-mail).
- *Expected volume of a Bachelor thesis*: A Bachelor thesis with 6 ECTS should be 20-25 pages long (40,000 - 50,000 characters, with footnotes but not including spaces; plus cover sheet and indices) (if this number of pages is exceeded by more than 10%, the thesis will be rejected as formally incorrect, see also No. 2).
- *Structure of the text* (s. also No. 8 below): The thesis should consist of three parts: I. Introduction; II. Main part (answering the question asked); III. Conclusion. (This is only an abstract outline; suitable content-related (sub)headings must be chosen).
- *Table of abbreviations* (see also No. 8 below): The table of abbreviations must contain all abbreviations used in the text (in the case of official documents and legislation, please indicate the administrative reference, i.e. SR number, BBI).
- *Bibliography* (see also No. 8 below): All works cited in the thesis must be listed in the bibliography. Please note that journal articles should be used in addition to standard works (by no means only introductory literature/textbooks). The bibliography is not included in the character limit.
- *Basic rule for referencing*: All statements in the text that are not self-evident must be supported by references to the relevant decisions and publications. In particular, the following statements must be substantiated: Definitions of terms (own definitions explicitly labelled so are excluded from this rule), (criticised) positions of other authors or foreign norm interpretations.
- *Spacing*: 1.5 lines.



- *Text font:* Times New Roman, 12 pt., justification and automatic hyphenation, left and right margin min. 2.5 cm
- *Footnotes font:* Times New Roman, 10 pt., justification and automatic hyphenation

2. Formally Incorrect and Insufficient Theses

- *Formally incorrect theses:* One orthographic or comma error per page is tolerated. Theses with more than five spelling or comma errors after five pages will be rejected for revision as formally incorrect.
- *Insufficient theses:* Insufficient theses will be rejected for revision. If a thesis is still unsatisfactory after the revision, it will be definitively rejected.

3. Submission

- *Printouts:* Submit only stapled or spiral bound works (no single sheets!)
- *Deadlines:* The latest day of submission for **Master Theses** is **Friday of the first week in June** (for submissions in the Spring Semester) and **Friday of the first week in December** (for submissions in the Fall Semester). The deadline is binding. A Bachelor or Master thesis that is submitted late or not at all will be graded 1 and will appear on the Transcript of Records. Postponement or cancellation of the submission deadline is possible only if compelling, unforeseeable and unavoidable reasons, in particular illness, can be proven.
- *Submission:* One physical copy of the thesis must be sent by post (not by registered post!) to: Prof. Dr. Altwicker, University of Zurich, Faculty of Law, Seilergraben 49, CH-8001 Zurich. One electronic copy in pdf format must be sent to:
lst.altwicker@rwi.uzh.ch.
- The following **signed and dated** declaration of authorship must be submitted on the last page of the thesis:

«I hereby declare that I have composed the presented written thesis independently and only with the aid of the sources mentioned in the indices or in the footnotes. I also assure that I have not already used this thesis as proof of my performance elsewhere. The thesis may be checked for plagiarism using appropriate software.»

The declaration of authorship is not included in the volume of the thesis and does not count towards the number of characters. The declaration should not be mentioned in the table of contents.



4. Method of Citing

- Please follow the OSCOLA guidelines for accurate citing. Find all detailed information here: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/publications/oscola>

5. Main Evaluation Criteria

- Topic fully covered / partially covered / missed; common thread / logical structure; own formulation of question / hypothesis; prioritisation; accurate legal terminology; competent dealing with primary and secondary sources; thoroughness and scope of the topic; level of innovation / originality; difficulty of the topic.

6. Cover Sheet

- The cover sheet must contain the following information: Type of thesis (Master or Bachelor thesis); first name and surname of the author of the thesis; address; matriculation number; e-mail; name of degree program (incl. major subject/minor subjects if applicable); title of the thesis; semester in which the thesis was written; first name and surname of the supervisor.

7. Literature Research

Primary Sources

- You are expected to focus on the analysis of primary sources of law, e.g. Security Council Resolutions, and, where relevant to your subject, the jurisprudence of international courts. Such sources should always be treated in their original form. Make sure to fully consider primary sources where relevant.
- UN sources are easily accessible at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/?ln=en&as=1>
- EU case-law: <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/recherche.jsf?language=de>
- For EU legislation see EUR-Lex: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/>
- For ECtHR case-law see HUDOC: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/>
- Swiss law: Swisslex
- German law: Beck-Online



- Foreign law (Oxford Guides to Foreign Jurisdictions):
<https://ox.libguides.com/c.php?g=422865&p=2887613>

- Foreign case-law: <http://worldcourts.com/>

Research

- It is recommended to use the database of the Max Planck Institute for International Law in Heidelberg as a starting point for research in international law (http://aleph.mpg.de/F?func=file&file_name=find-b&local_base=vrh01). In particular, you can find essays concerning your research topic.
- A good introduction into the topic can often be found via the Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law by searching for relevant keywords (at the end of each article, reference is made to standard literature and - more importantly - to relevant primary sources): <https://opil.ouplaw.com/home/MPIL>
- Sometimes it may be helpful to enter the title of a journal in "Google", provided you are on the university network. "Google Scholar" and "Google Books" are further recommended for research.
- To identify the main stakeholders in the debate, you can use "Publish or Perish": <https://harzing.com/download/PoP8Setup.exe>
- Research in "swisscovery" may also be useful.

Article Data Bases

- Available at UZH at <https://www.ius.uzh.ch/de/library/search.html>.
- Essays in English can be found at Westlaw or HeinOnline (<https://home.heinonline.org/>). For Westlaw, enter the name of the journal (e.g. American Journal of International Law) in the "Database" field and then search using, for example, TI ("American Journal of International Law") (for title) or AU ("Ronald Dworkin") (for author). A handy user manual for Westlaw can be found on their website.
- Swiss secondary literature is very well accessible via Swisslex.
- German secondary literature is accessible via Beck-Online.



8. Structure of Bachelor and Master Theses

Abstract

Max. 10 lines, in which the most important results of the thesis are summarised (in complete sentences, no bullet points)

Table of contents

Including page references

Table of abbreviations

ECtHR European Court of Human Rights
ICJ International Court of Justice

*I. Introduction/Questions**

The introduction should address the following points:

- Research question
- Relevance of the research question
- Background/Context of the research question
- Hypothesis, if applicable
- Literature review: Outline of three to five of the most important approaches to / papers written on the problem
- Author's contribution: Based on the literature review, what is your (original) contribution, where do you go beyond the existing literature?
- Outline of the structure of the thesis

*II. Main part**

- Answering the question outlined in the introduction
- Suitable subheadings

*III. Conclusion**

- How can the results be put in a nutshell (not just a summary)?
- What is left open?
- Where is further research needed?

Bibliography

- Important: Do not solely cite textbooks, but problem-specific literature
- In the case of multiple citations, please provide your own abbreviation of the piece / essay in brackets and only quote this abbreviation in the footnotes.

List of legal sources (not compulsory)

Useful if a large number of legal sources is cited

* Adapt headings, i.e. do not simply write "main part", but e.g. "meanings of the concept of freedom as understood by Immanuel Kant".